

Stillwater Train Derailment Press Release

Reed Point, Montana (June 28, 2023) – 1:00pm

Unified Command shared that crews safely removed a second asphalt car from the river Monday evening. Construction of a causeway continues this morning to improve access to the cars in the river. Additional site preparation work on the east side of the river will also improve access to the rail cars. Once this work is complete, crews will begin transferring the contents of the asphalt cars on the east side of the bridge, that have not entered the river, into stable railcars and moving them to a safe location.

Representatives from Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) have visited the site. According to FWP, “Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks has implemented an emergency closure on portions of the Yellowstone River in Stillwater County following the partial bridge collapse and train derailment. The Yellowstone River is closed to all public access 1 mile upstream and 2.5 miles downstream of the Twin Bridges Road railroad bridge in Stillwater County until further notice. River and access site closures are subject to change based on condition assessments and needs of emergency response agencies.” A link to their full press release can be found here: <https://fwp.mt.gov/homepage/news/2023/jun/0627-no-attachmentsemergency-closure-on-yellowstone-river-in-stillwater-county>.

Unified Command continues downstream asphalt material assessment efforts, along with water and air quality monitoring. A shoreline assessment and cleanup plan is in progress based on assessment and monitoring data. Strategies for assessing potential impacts are development. The Oiled Wildlife Care Network (OWCN) has been activated, and trained personnel are on-scene to provide veterinary care. No volunteers for wildlife care are currently needed. Only trained wildlife specialists should handle wildlife. For the safety of both the public and the animals, the public is advised not to touch or approach oiled or injured wildlife. Dogs should also be kept away.

Meetings were held Tuesday with local agricultural stakeholders to answer questions and address strategies being discussed to restore irrigation.

A public meeting regarding the derailment and response efforts will be held on Wednesday, June 28, at 7:00pm at the Columbus High School Gym, 433 N 3rd St, Columbus, MT 59019. For more information and details please visit: <https://response.epa.gov/stillwatertrainderailment>.

Unified Command plans to send out a press release Thursday afternoon.

To report observed asphalt material submit information to: rpderailment@mtrail.com.

For more information, please visit the response websites at:

<https://response.epa.gov/stillwatertrainderailment>

<https://www.stillwatercountymt.gov/train-derailment/>

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This response is operating under a Unified Command which enables different jurisdictions and organizations to jointly manage and direct incident activities. Unified Command for this incident is comprised of representatives from Stillwater County Disaster and Emergency Services, the Montana Department of Environmental Quality, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and Montana Rail Link.

